

the viewpoint, goodness may even emanate from snake venoms. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Brazil conducts a snake farm and institute for the production of venoms in order to produce anti-venom serums. Apparently, snakes compel scientific investigation, mitigating, in this way, their evils in other ways. Leeches used to be very popular, 7,000,000 having been used annually in London, and 10,000,000 in Paris. An active constituent in the cervical glands of these animals is hirudin, which prevents the clotting of blood. Harmless as it appears, the leech has been used, nevertheless, as an instrument of suicide. The pharmacologist, Binz, described the case of a young lady in Paris who attempted suicide by inducing free hemorrhage with a number of leeches. Having bought fifty of them, she undressed completely and applied them to her body from the knees to the heart. The creatures having satiated themselves dropped off, but the bites continued to bleed, and the lady was found lying on the floor in a deep swoon. Thus it seems that animal poisons and products possess power for evil as well as for good, as the case may be, and the more is known and understood about them the better for humanity and the animals themselves.

Whereof the unabated interest and labors continue, and the results obtained seem to justify the effort. Many questions, however, still remain unanswered. Interesting speculations have been made and will continue to be made about animal poisons. Has anyone yet been able to explain accurately the innocuousness of the violent poisons for the animals elaborating them (for example, venoms for snakes); the rôle and function of the constituents in the endocrine glands, if not the organs themselves; the purpose of active constituents not only in animals, but also of alkaloids, glucosides, etc., in plants?

Flury, F.: *Klinisches Wochenschrift*, 1923, 2:2157, "Animal Poisons in Their Relation to Medicine."

### THE ANNUAL REGISTRATION OF DOCTORS MOVEMENT

This question is an old one. It has been actively revived as an outgrowth of the "Diploma-Mill Scandal." It has been and is now being actively promoted in several states.

CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE has not as yet taken an editorial stand in the matter, and will do so only when the policy of the California Medical Association has been decided. Unless we miss our guess as to the direction of political winds, it will be necessary for the California Medical Association to take a stand and to request the League for the Conservation of Public Health to promote that stand in the next session of the legislature.

In the meantime the columns of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE are open to a discussion of the subject by members and worth-while organizations. Physicians are not a unit at present in their opinions on the subject. When they have heard the arguments for and against the movement, we can probably get together and present a fairly solid front for what seems best for the welfare of sick people and, therefore, for unselfish physicians.

In making up our minds, we must be careful not to confuse the issues between *registration* and *taxation*. They are entirely separate problems, but at-

tempts have been made to tie them together because the vast majority of physicians are known to be definitely opposed to the special tax, and the California Medical Association is definitely on record to that effect. We suspect that the opinion may not be so unanimous as to the advisability of the annual registration of doctors.

### NEW YORK'S ACTION

A bill providing annual compulsory registration of doctors was defeated in the recently adjourned New York legislature. The doctors were so divided on the bill that two separate and opposing groups presented their claims quite aggressively at Albany.

If a sufficient number of our members are interested enough to make the request, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will abstract the extensive record of the arguments presented on both sides of the question.

### THE SITUATION IN ILLINOIS

The May issue of the Illinois Medical Journal discusses the subject editorially under a heading of "Why Illinois Doctors Oppose Annual Re-registration."

The editor first calls attention to the situation in Connecticut which "has a medical population of 1727 licensed physicians. The state has had an annual re-registration law for five years. The registration feature did nothing to purge that state of quack doctors and those holding fraudulent diplomas."

The objections to the requirement are summarized under twelve headings:

"First. The principle is wrong; it savors of autocracy, which latter is repulsive to American ideals.

"Second. Because of unpleasant experience with the first director of the Department of Education and Licensure, a layman and an autocrat of the most pronounced type, who no sooner discovered the autocratic powers that fell within the scope of his office than he attempted to put over a re-registration law, one of the provisions of which read:

"In every proceeding under the provisions of this Act an averment that the defendant at the time of the alleged offense was without the required license or certificate of renewal of registration shall be taken as true, unless disproved by the defendant."

"This paragraph would represent Bolshevism in action.

"Third. A re-registration law would serve to beat practitioners into submission to those 'wise social experiments' or into innocuousness by denying him the right to practice his profession.

"Fourth. A re-registration law would act as a legislative club to beat the practitioners into submission to panelization or to render them innocuous by taking away their licenses under the police power of the state (Dr. Dent vs. State of West Virginia, 129 U. S. Reports, page 114, year 1889).

"Fifth. It nullifies the license already granted a doctor to practice medicine in perpetuity and substitutes, therefore, a year to year license.

"Sixth. The present registration in the County Clerk's office is sufficient.

"Seventh. The record of every doctor licensed to practice medicine in Illinois is on file in the De-

partment of Education and Registration at Springfield.

"Eighth. It is class legislation, in that the profession is to be charged a fee to create a fund purging the state of illegal practitioners when, as a matter of fact, this duty devolves upon the state and not upon the medical profession. Ridding the state of illegal and incompetent practitioners is a measure purely in the interest of the people who should pay for it, and not have it placed as an extra tax upon the medical profession.

"Ninth. It is unnecessary, as the police power already exists for the control of practitioners not duly licensed. More law is not needed, but better enforcement of existing law is.

"Tenth. It is demeaning to a great and noble profession in its requirements as to filing of photographs. Why not finger-prints?

"Eleventh. It will cause expense and inconvenience, with no proportionate return to the public or to the profession.

"Twelfth. It is a humiliating and absurd proposition, this annual re-registration and the fee of \$2 for the privilege of announcing to your beloved people who have known you to be a doctor for a score or more of years, that given life and health and the gracious permission of the clerk to whom you proffer your \$2 fee, you expect to continue to be a doctor for the ensuing year."

CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will be glad to publish short impersonal discussions of any phase of this question.

#### WITHIN THE LAW

This well-known expression as applied to finance and business in general is coming into use extensively in the practice of medicine. The Medical Practice Act and its various court interpretations constitutes the law for those who treat the sick—or the well for that matter. There are an ever-growing number of "doctors" who, with the co-operation of very clever attorneys, skate just as close to the edge of this law as is possible without entangling themselves in its meshes.

Only those whose business it is to know about the various schemes of keeping within the law have an idea of the variety and ramifications of these processes or of the alleged doctors who are so active in the field. Even with the very best of legal advice they are constantly entangling themselves in the meshes of the law, and the results are to be seen in the press dispatches almost any day one cares to look.

One interesting angle being much overworked by these people is that of education. Hundreds of people are practicing medicine in California and avoiding the consequences of the law by stating that they are not practicing medicine, but that they are educating the public and that they are only showing them how to carry these educational edicts into practice.

Another large group are the "beauty specialists." Many of these are little better than procurers for licentiates to practice medicine. Some of them use

the word "Doctor" in front of their names, particularly when talking to people who don't know any better. They do everything themselves that they believe they can get away with without falling afoul of the legal authorities, and they delegate, upon a commission basis, other things to persons licensed to treat the sick. We have before us at the present time an extreme example of one of these "doctors" who is advertising extensively in rather clever ways, and doing a large business among people in California who should know better.

In her office is carried on the so-called "scientific skin rejuvenation" and other forms of rejuvenation. The skin is examined by an ordinary hand magnifying glass and a diagnosis is made, which is, of course, always what would be expected from such an examination. Methods of skin-peeling, plumping, massage, etc., are carried out. The "doctor" in charge told an alleged patient recently that "she got a teacup full of vaseline from the face of a patient who had been mistreated by another beauty specialist." This "doctor" claims to have a peeling process that "can remove all scar tissue left as result of operation or otherwise." She charges \$150 for a treatment and \$10 a visit thereafter.

The notorious Steinach treatment for women is arranged for through this joint and the "doctor" claims that she has the work done by a roentgenologist for \$500 per patient. If the patient is a male and wants rejuvenation, she claims to be in equally intimate contact with another surgeon who will do the usual transplantation. In other words, this "beauty specialist" stays "within the law" herself and makes financial and legal contacts with others who take care of the things she cannot do herself without becoming a law violator.

This is only one of scores of situations all slightly different, showing how enlightened people of California are being buncoed wholesale in all matters pertaining to health.

#### GOVERNMENT PRACTICES MEDICINE

Few of us who are busy with other affairs realize to what extent and by what a variety of methods government is practicing medicine. National, state, county, and municipal governments are all "doctors" to a certain percentage of the population, and the services rendered include prevention and treatment of disease as well as medical education and medical research.

There is no well-established policy or uniform method as to just what and how much medical work government should do. Neither is there uniform agreement among our people as to what and how much "doctoring" should be by government. One extreme group of persons—and it is a growing group—believes that government should manage and conduct through its salaried agents all and every phase of the practice of medicine and public health. The only place where this has been actually undertaken is in Soviet Russia. The other extreme group of citizens are opposed to government, as such, engaging in the practice of medicine and public health at all. They believe that government should purchase its required health services from